

# Warsaw

## Model United Nations



**October 2012 Conference:  
Human Rights Council  
Guide**



# Chairs' foreword

Honorable Delegates,

On behalf of the whole Secretariat, we would like to welcome you all to the Human Rights Council session of the 2012 Warsaw Model United Nations. I am Antonina Bargielowska Johnsen and I will be your Chair for the duration of this conference alongside with my fellow Deputy Chair, Jan Bednarz.

We're looking forward to meeting you and debating upon the topic of 'Improving conditions in districts of extreme poverty'. We wish that the issue to be discussed in the council will challenge you to participate in the session with full commitment and big creativity in order to come up with a final resolution showing completely new approach to the problem already tackled during many previous United Nations sessions.

There exist many policies regarding the situation of slum dwellers worldwide. Most of them suggest relocating poor people to areas outside the city, providing them with adequate housing and improving the physical conditions of their lives. In our opinion, such solutions do not change the situation significantly in the long run, as the problem is not being tackled from its roots. And what is the root of the issue? Definitely not lack of the access to adequate housing, sanitation or high crime rates. All the aforementioned are the direct consequences of the **LACK OF PRIMARY EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT**. In our opinion, the best way to deal with the issue is implementing effective education system, which would contribute to the improvement of every single aspect of slum dweller's lives and make their way out of the vicious cycle of poverty. We believe that it's the lack of education which is the trigger for extreme hunger and poverty of slum dwellers. Furthermore, we think that giving job opportunities to the inhabitants of shanty towns is absolutely essential.

In our opinion, slum dwellers can help themselves, if the international community gives them appropriate tools to do it. They don't need ready made houses- they shall build them themselves. They don't need money itself- they need places where they could earn it. That's why during this year's session, we would like to concentrate more on the **FISHING ROD** than on the **FISH**. If we give them just the fish, they will soon eat all up. If we provide them with the fishing rod, they won't starve now, nor in the future.





This document should only be a starting point for your research in this field, though. That's why we recommend some useful websites in addition. We advise to develop a deep understanding of the topic, simply to become aware of what is going to be discussed in the council and what kind of view you, as representatives of different countries will have on the topic of improving lives of slum dwellers.

We hope the debate in the council will be fruitful and passionate. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about this study guide, the topic or the form of the debates.

Best regards,

**Antonina BARGIEŁOWSKA JOHNSEN** - Chair of the Human Rights Council

**Jan BEDNARZ** - Deputy Chair of the Human Rights Council

email: [hrc@wawmun.pl](mailto:hrc@wawmun.pl)





# 1. Introduction

5 reasons why we think that the topic: 'Improving conditions in districts of extreme poverty' is perfect for the Human Right Council session 2012:

- 1.** 1 billion of slum dwellers can be considered as the minority, as they're often excluded from the rest of the urban society. They lack basic human rights such as the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being, primary education, social security, access to public service. They are often thought to be the perpetrators of the crime, not the victims. All in all, the topic fits into the main theme of the conference, which is 'Minorities in focus'.
- 2.** It stands in line with most of the Milenium Development Goals, an international document which 193 United Nations member states agreed to achieve until 2015. The topic strictly corresponds with Goal 1: 'Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty', Goal 2: 'Achieve universal primary education', Goal 4: 'Reduce child mortality rates'. Furthermore, it is directly related to Target 7D: 'By 2020, achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.'
- 3.** The situation of slum dwellers is likely to be deteriorating. (it that what you meant?). In the next 30 years, the global number of inhabitants of districts of poverty will increase to about 2 billion, if no concrete action is taken, therefore international cooperation is absolutely crucial in solving the issue.
- 4.** Previous measures concerning the problem failed to support slum dwellers effectively, also because of the wrong management and inappropriate methods. Maybe the problem needs to be tackled from a different angle, different perspective? That's why we're looking for new ideas, fresh thoughts, innovative solutions. Let's broaden our horizons!
- 5.** Last, but not least: It leaves space for creativity for Delegates. It's a very debatable topic, as there exist so many policies regarding impoverished districts, so many points of view and controversial opinions, which hopefully will make every single Delegate have a word in the discussion!



## 2. Facts and data concerning the topic

The United Nations agency UN-habitat defines a slum household as: “a group of individuals living under the same roof in an urban area who lack one or more of the following:

1. Durable housing of a permanent nature that protects against extreme climate conditions.
2. Sufficient living space, which means not more than three people sharing the same room.
3. Easy access to safe water in sufficient amounts at an affordable price.
4. Access to adequate sanitation in the form of a private or public toilet shared by a reasonable number of people.
5. Security of tenure that prevents forced evictions.”

Slum households can be found all around the world, and are called in countless different ways: favelas (Portuguese, Brazil), bidonvilles (French), Bohios (Spanish, Cuba), Bustee (Hindu, Kolkata), Baraks (Russian, Moscow), Baladi (Arabic, Cairo), Tanake (Beirut), shantytowns, and countless others.

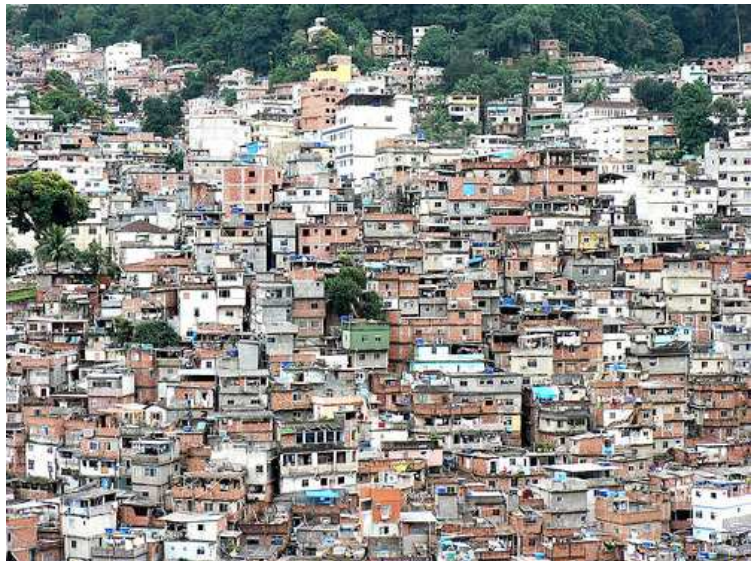


Photo 1. Favelas in Sao Paulo, Brazil

### **Quick facts:**

- One billion people live in slums today, and this figure is predicted to escalate to 2 billion by 2030, and 3 billion in 2050.
- The percentage of urban dwellers living in slums has dropped from 47% to 37% during the years 1990-2005, however due to the rising of population, the number of slum dwellers is still increasing gradually.
-

- The situation is the most severe in the sub-Saharan Africa, where the growth rate of the number of slum dwellers was equal to 33 million in 4 years (2001-2005).
- In the capital city of Kenya, Nairobi, one out of five inhabitants is a slum-dweller.
- More than 50 per cent of the urban population in South Asia, and 40 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa, lack access to sanitation services.
- The majority of slum dwellers in African cities are between the ages of 15 and 24.
- Between 2000 and 2010, 227 million people in the developing world will have been lifted out of slum conditions; 74 per cent were in Asia, primarily China and India.
- 2010 is the halfway point MDGs' deadline is in 2015 towards the deadline for the "slum target" of the Millennium Development Goals (by 2015, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers)

#### **The everyday reality of slum dwellers:**

1. The physical and environmental conditions modern slum-dwellers live in are in a desperate need of upgrading. These include:

- a) Inadequate housing

Most slum households have an unstable construction (due to the usage of impermanent materials), that doesn't provide appropriate protection from climatic conditions such as rain and heat.

Furthermore, these dwellings are often built in hazardous locations, since no one is responsible for the authorization of construction.

- b) Lack of access to improved drinking water. In 2002, the Indian Sample Survey organization conducted research revealing that approximately 84% of the notified slums have access to water only through the pipeline supply (tap water).



Photo 2. Slums in India



- c) Lack of access to improved sanitation: “A household is considered to have access to improved sanitation, if an excreta disposal system, either in the form of a private toilet or a public toilet shared with a reasonable number of people, is available to household members.” An example of how extreme the situation is several slums is that there is only one toilet for every 500 people living in the slums of Nairobi, Kenya.
- d) Overcrowded living area. Living conditions are considered insufficient when more than 4 people are forced to share a tiny room. One can only imagine how severe the situation is in the infamous Kenyan slum “Kibera”, where the population density is estimated at 3.000 per hectare. That is 750,000 people per square mile, and less than 12 squared meters per person. This makes the slums on the outskirts of Nairobi one of the most crowded places on earth.



2. Besides the basic environmental conditions, there are also several social and political factors that have a drastic impact on the slum reality. Some main examples of these are:

Photo 3. District of extreme poverty in Jakarta, Indonesia

- a) In most cases, the inhabitants of impoverished districts don't have access to primary education. A study in the slums of Dhaka City in Bangladesh showed that most inhabitants are illiterate. 58% of the surveyed individuals never attended school. 20% have attended primary school, 16% have attended secondary school but dropped out. Only 6% finished secondary school and attended a higher level of qualification.
- b) Depending on the cultural background of the location of a slum, gender equality may also be an issue. According to a Women-Watch report entitled “Gender equality and sustainable urbanization”:



- c) Woman-headed households suffer disproportionately from inadequate housing in impoverished districts.
  - d) Lack of security of tenure: Secure Tenure is the right of all individuals and groups to effective protection by the State against arbitrary unlawful evictions. In the years 1998-2006 over 15 million persons were evicted from their homes. The most evictions in that time period took place in Africa (7.5 million persons).
  - e) Denial of participation. Authorities often deny slum-dwellers the opportunity to have a say in the processes and decisions that have direct impact on their lives. Slum-dwellers from Cairo were not even given a chance to speak their minds before they were evicted from their homes in 2009.
  - f) High (official) unemployment rates in areas of extreme urban poverty are a result of few “formal sector” job opportunities available to the slum population. Most slum-dwellers earn a living from informal sector activities, such as jobs in the garment industry, recycling of solid waste, or even working as domestic servants. Unfortunately many slum dwellers end up working for organized crime groups.
3. Organized crime groups play a key role in the slum reality. Due to the inability of local authorities, they often assume power in the districts. This leads to the discrimination of entire slum communities, and all inhabitants are considered and treated like criminals in the outside world. The classic example to this particular phenomenon is Rio de Janeiro. In the infamous favelas, multiple gangs fight with each other for the control of territory. Drug trafficking is their main source of income, and their “business” employs many inhabitants of the favelas. Whenever the police enters the favelas, there are shootings between them and the traffickers. In these tragic events, many innocent slum-dwellers are killed. This illustrates how most inhabitants of slums are not the source of crime, but merely victims of the violence that follows it.

### **Addressing the issue of slums:**

There are several ways in which the slum issue is addressed in the modern world. History has shown us that the most popular one is simply slum clearance. This means that inhabitants of such districts are evicted from their “households”, and the buildings are demolished. This method has only led to the creation of new districts of urban poverty, and therefore has been proved ineffective. This “solution” might seem too brutal to be used in the modern world, but the truth is that many governments still put it to use. Around 2 million a year are victims of forced evictions. As earlier mentioned, in 2009





Egyptian authorities cleared its country's capital of shacks, to make way for investment projects (related to the Cairo 2050 master plan). In the process they moved thousands of families to new settlements, thus distancing them from their workplaces. Similar situations take place in the rapidly developing India. This contemptible response without doubt does more harm to the slum-dweller

population than good, as the solution of the issue is simply postponed by such a measure.

Another quite popular approach to the case is to simply provide “blanket” solutions for the inhabitants, by gradually increasing the physical living



conditions.

Governments provide better housing, sanitation and infrastructure. Most countries facing the problem of extreme urban poverty today believe this approach will

end the problem in the long run.

Photo 4. Bulldozing in the slum district in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Unfortunately, due to the gradual increase of slum-dwellers in the world (six million per year in 2000-2010 according to official UN statistics), there is a drastic need for a more specified strategy. It has to be acknowledged that improving solely the environmental living conditions addresses only the results of “the urbanization of poverty”, and not its cause. One of the main messages of the UN-habitat report entitled “The Challenge of slums” is that “future policies should go beyond the physical dimension of slums by addressing the problems underlying urban poverty”.

The newest approach is referred to as **SLUM UPGRADING**. The main goal of slum upgrading is to permanently integrate slum districts into modern urban society. The difference between this method and the others is that slum upgrading aims at involving the urban poor into improving their own living conditions. UN-habitat reports clearly state that slum-dwellers should play a key role in the entire process. But they cannot achieve anything alone. Authorities need to engage in the process both on the local and the national level.



“To improve urban inclusiveness, urban policies should increasingly aim at creating safer cities. This could be achieved through better housing policies for the urban low-income population (including slum dwellers), effective urban employment generation policies, more effective formal policing and public justice institutions, as well as strong community-based mechanisms for dealing with urban crime.”

“The Challenge of Slums” report 2003

The United Nations strongly supports the idea of slum upgrading, and therefore has already created a worldwide “Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme” (or PSUP for short), which works on encouraging this strategy in many countries. Here is an extract from the UN-habitat website, briefly describing the main purpose of the programme:

„The programme’s purpose is to strengthen capacity of local, central and regional institutions and key stakeholders’ in settlement and slum improvement through the use of good governance and management approaches, pilot projects and contributing, where needed, to the policy development, and the implementation of institutional, legislative, financial, and normative and implementation frameworks.

To contribute to meet these challenges, the PSUP programme seeks to harmonize with local and national stakeholders on key slum upgrading projects through initiating the creation of a network for regional slum upgrading challenges. For this purpose, regional training and policy seminars on the programme’s concept, themes and methods will be organized with all involved stakeholders. The programme also aims to support local and national authorities in identifying adequate funding to carry out specific activities.”

The PSUP has been actively working towards the accomplishment of MDG goal 7, target 11 in 38 states in sub-Saharan Africa (where the cases of extreme urban poverty are the most severe), as well as the Pacific and Caribbean region. No countries in Latin America or Asia participate in the project. This undertaking has the official support of the European Commission.



### 3. Improving conditions in districts of extreme poverty through EDUCATION and EMPLOYMENT

The most vital question of the whole debate will be: how can we EFFECTIVELY improve the lives of slum dwellers and how can we make sure that they become a part of the urban society?

#### a) Education

In our opinion, education is crucial in eradicating extreme poverty, as according to many surveys, there exists a strong correlation between poverty, health, crime rates, gender inequality and lack of education. The report made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations within the context of the Decade for the Eradication of Poverty confirms that universal primary education is central to the fight against poverty.



Photo 5. School in a bus in India

Researches show that education has a huge impact on improved social indicators. Schooling has a special multiplier effect for women. A woman who is educated will typically be healthier, have fewer children and have more opportunities to increase household income. Her children, in turn, will experience lower mortality rates, better nutrition and better overall health.

Another evidence supporting the strong relationship between poverty and lack of education is a document written by Servaas van der Berg (a professor of Economics at the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa) from the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), where

he explains what impact does education have on the economic growth and general living standards of people:

[http://www.iiep.unesco.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Info\\_Services\\_Publications/pdf/2009/EdPol10.pdf](http://www.iiep.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Info_Services_Publications/pdf/2009/EdPol10.pdf)

Essential are the conclusions of the entire work: "This connection between education and poverty works through three mechanisms: firstly, more educated people earn more; secondly, more (and especially better quality) education improves economic growth and thereby economic opportunities and incomes; and thirdly, education brings wider social benefits that improve economic development and especially the situation of the poor, such as lower fertility, improved health care of children, and greater participation of women in the labour force."

There are different approaches to implementing a successful education system in the districts of poverty.

According to Charles Leadbeater, a British author and former advisor to Tony Blair, learning has to be relevant to the society. In the TED talk "Education innovation in the slums"

([http://www.ted.com/talks/charles\\_leadbeater\\_on\\_education.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/charles_leadbeater_on_education.html)), he states: "If you want to attract people who could buy guns, wear jewelry, ride motorbikes and get girls through the drugs trade — to education, having a compulsory curriculum doesn't really make sense."



He claims that the most efficient way to learn for slum children is:

- through PULL (motivate, attract to learning, encourage dreams, show the perspectives), not PUSH (force, make education

compulsory)

Photo 6. Ballet dance classes in Kenyan slums

- learning which is productive and creative, not academic and analytical
- learning through music, dance and sport (example of learning through the violin or making soap)
- learning which starts from questions and projects, not knowledge and curriculum





- learning which involves using INTERNET, in line with the experiment “Hole in the Wall” undertaken by Sugata Mitra (a professor of Educational Technology at the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences at Newcastle University), who in 1999 installed a computer in a kiosk created within a wall in a slum at Kalkaji/Delhi which slum children were allowed to use freely:  
([http://www.ted.com/talks/sugata\\_mitra\\_shows\\_how\\_kids\\_teach\\_the\\_mselves.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/sugata_mitra_shows_how_kids_teach_the_mselves.html))

Extract from a blog of an inhabitant of a favela in Rio de Janeiro

(<http://lifeinrocinha.blogspot.com/2011/04/kids-in-favelas.html>):

“I think education and activities are the main things needed for our youth. But like kids everywhere, school has to be fun. Teachers need to be able to capture a child’s attention and get them interested in learning. I know this is much to ask but our youth is our future and we must nourish them through education and cultural activities. The teens need other options besides drugs and sex. They need leadership programs or for the older ones work/study programs in the fields they have interest in.”

There exist many initiatives and projects concerning improvement of education and wealthier of children. This also includes actions aiming at making shanty town a friendlier and safer place for children. Here are some of the examples (however, we encourage Delegates to research further):



Photo 7. Favela Painting in Rio de Janeiro

- The Favela Project, which “uses soccer as a vehicle for positive change in the lives of children in some of Brazil's poorest urban areas.”  
(<http://www.favelaproject.org/index.html>)
- Ballet dance classes in Kenyan slums ([http://articles.cnn.com/2011-04-13/world/kenya.ballet.mathare\\_1\\_dance-classes-ballet-slums?\\_s=PM:WORLD](http://articles.cnn.com/2011-04-13/world/kenya.ballet.mathare_1_dance-classes-ballet-slums?_s=PM:WORLD))
- Favela Painting (<http://www.favelapainting.com/>)





## b) Employment

Tracing the roots of creation and development of shanty towns is important to understand the problems they are facing. During the times of a rapid population growth, where more and more people migrate from rural to urban areas, unemployment is the main reason for new comers turning into extreme poverty, as migrants have a limited number of jobs available to them when they arrive in the city. Without income, they end up in slums.

In our opinion, employment is another crucial aspect in improving the conditions in shanty towns around the world, as it is directly linked with



Photo 8. Informal economy in Dharavi, Mumbai

eradicating extreme poverty and hunger and consequently, significant improvement in education, health care and the social side of life in slums in general. It is important to point out that employment in the districts of poverty not only contributes to a higher family income (better quality of life- better nutrition, housing etc.), but also has a huge impact on lengthening life expectancy, decrease in the crime rates and prevalence of the ubiquitous violence. A job represents a transformative shift from a life of instability, insecurity and dependence to a life of freedom, dignity and pride. For millions of slum children it's a chance for not getting involved in drug trafficking and gang conflicts.

According to the article about employment as one of the means to combat violence in Jakarta's slums (<http://futurechallenges.org/searchlight/stopping-the-violence-in-jakarta's-slums/>):

“For the long term, the only sustainable solution for dealing with violence in slums is to provide more employment opportunities. Job provision is effective in the long run because it directly deals with one of the root causes of the violence: high unemployment.”

All projects providing work places in both formal and informal sector of the economy seek to improve the conditions of life in shanty towns.

The importance of informal economy in slums has to be emphasised.

Experts estimate that the informal sector is responsible for the overwhelming majority of India's annual economic growth and as much as 90% of all employment (the informal economy exists largely outside government oversight and, in the case of slums like Dharavi, without government help or encouragement).

In Benin, slum dwellers comprise 75% of informal sector workers, while in Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Chad and Ethiopia, they make up 90% of the informal labour force.

Robert Neuwirth (an American journalist and author describing his experiences living in squatter communities in Nairobi, Rio de Janeiro, Constantinople and Mumbai) in a TED talk „The power of the informal economy”

([http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/robert\\_neuwirth\\_the\\_power\\_of\\_the\\_informal\\_economy.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/robert_neuwirth_the_power_of_the_informal_economy.html)) explains that it plays a vital role in the developing urban economies of many low- and middle-income countries, therefore it mustn't be neglected by governments of such areas.

According to a report „Urban development: promoting jobs, upgrading slums, and developing alternatives to new slum formation”

(<http://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/citiesalliance.org/files/millennium-project-urban-dev11.pdf>):

“To facilitate the shift into the formal sector, local authorities should adjust their laws and regulations to lower the costs and increase the benefits for people to formalize their enterprises. They should also provide assistance to small enterprises to upgrade skills and increase access to productive resources and market opportunities.”

Bearing in mind the importance of work places in deprived areas, there exist many different ways of dealing with unemployment in shanty towns, some of which we find particularly inspiring. We advise all Delegates to undertake a further research in this field, though.



Photo 9. Kenyan children collecting waste

One of good examples of fighting unemployment is an action initiated in Kenya a urban slums supporting young people to set up and run their own viable recycling, and water and sanitation enterprises

(<http://www.oxfam.org.uk/get-involved/philanthropy/donate-to-a-project/archive/kenya-urban>) The project activities will create jobs whilst simultaneously improving the living conditions of thousands of slum dwellers. An expected results of this initiative are:

- At least 240 young people will have secure employment and will earn a stable income, and 5,000 other people will be engaged in collecting waste that they then sell on to the recycling plant to notably increase their incomes.
- The higher profits available for recycling waste should provide a strong incentive for people to collect waste, bringing about a cleaner slum environment.
- The water kiosks and sanitation facilities will offer residents more dignity, reduce the risk of waterborne diseases, and bring down the costs of clean water in the community.

One of the ways of finding solution to the problem of unemployment is slum tourism. Local inhabitants of districts of poverty are often being employed as guides during such trips, which increases their incomes significantly. That's an example of slum tourism in Rio de Janeiro Brazil:

<http://www.eturbonews.com/18214/rio-de-janeiro-promotes-slum-tourism>



Photo 8. Slum tourism in India



## ~~Additional information for delegates~~

### **Further research:**

It is strongly advisable that you read much more additional information to attain a picture of your own country's views on the "Improving conditions in districts of extreme poverty". Here are some of the websites which proved useful for us:

- UN-habitat - Urban development <http://www.unhabitat.org/categories.asp?catid=9>
- Slum upgrading [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slum\\_upgrading](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slum_upgrading)
- Cities Alliance - Cities Without Slums <http://www.citiesalliance.org/>

We also recommend that the Delegates become familiar with The Universal Declaration of Human Right by the General Assembly of the United Nations, as it is fundamental for the Delegates of the Human Rights Council.

<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>

### **What you need to prepare:**

The council's task is to produce a resolution suggesting a solution to the problem outlined in this guide. In order to facilitate achieving our common goal we kindly request each Delegate in our Council to prepare policy statements, as well as notes in the form of a draft resolution.

### **Policy statements**

It is an overview of country's policy towards a specific subject subject. Therefore, each Delegate should prepare a policy statement. The desired length of the statement is about 2 minutes. At the beginning of the discussion each Delegate will be asked to present the document in order to familiarize other Delegates with the country's policy. It will be useful later for finding co-submitters of the resolution.

### **Draft resolutions**

Preparing a draft resolution beforehand makes lobbying more efficient. You may base your resolution on those submitted by the UN (especially Perambulatory Clauses). However, remember that the idea of Model United





Nations is to find and present new, innovative solutions to the international problems. Draft resolutions will be discussed during informal lobbying. You may prepare your own, complete propositions and find the countries willing to co-submit your draft or you can prepare solely your desired clauses and search for appropriate draft resolution introduced by another member of the council, in which they can be implemented. Tips on writing the documents, as well as information about the Opening Speech, which not every delegate has to prepare can be found on our website (<http://www.wawmun.pl>). We recommend studying the WawMUN Instruction Booklet, especially if it is your first conference.

**While preparing to the Conference please remember that:**

- you, as a Delegate, ALWAYS REPRESENT YOUR COUNTRIES POLICY, not your personal attitude,
- you should not replicate ideas or solutions from United Nations resolutions, we are looking for a new approach to the given problem,
- you should not propose any kind of military activities, as this does not lay in the Council's competence.

Additionally, we strongly recommend contacting your country's embassy - it might be exceptionally helpful in getting a better insight in its foreign policy and engagement.

Once again, we are looking forward to meeting you in October!

Antonina BARGIEŁOWSKA JOHNSEN and Jan BEDNARZ

